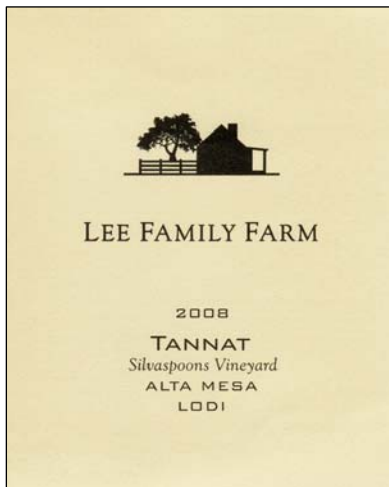




LEE FAMILY FARM

2008 Silvaspoons Vineyard Tannat

Tannat originated in the foothills of the Pyrenées. At Silvaspoons Vineyards in Alta Mesa this grape feels at home in California's Mediterranean climate and the shadow of the Sierra Nevada mountain range.



The Vineyard and the Grape

Although the origin of Tannat is the Basque regions of the Pyrenées foothills, it has traveled to many corners of the wine growing world. It is most well known for the powerful wines that it produces in Madiran, an AOC in southwestern France. These wines are notable for being dense with stalwart tannins, requiring extended aging. However, utilizing modern wine making techniques, Tannat can be much more approachable closer to the time of bottling.

Ron Silva is our source for this old world grape. His Silvaspoons Vineyard is in Alta Mesa; a sub-appellation of the Lodi AVA. The Silvaspoons Vineyard Tannat is planted on 101-14 rootstock. This is a low vigor, low yielding rootstock which is ideal for the dry, warm climate of Alta Mesa. Ron selected cuttings of the Horton clone to plant in his vineyard. He uses a quadrilateral, T-bar trellising system, with 11x6 spacing, resulting in 660 plants per acre.

The vines are arranged in a north-south row orientation for even sun exposure. The shoots are heavily thinned to improve air flow. The vines are limited to one

grape cluster per shoot, enabling the plant to concentrate its energy into one high quality cluster. The vineyard is farmed with sustainable methods; Ron applies natural compost which includes grape pumice and potassium. Hybrid mustard is planted within the rows to control bugs. Each row is individually watered as needed.

The Vintage

In 2008 there was some initial concern about freeze damage to the vineyard. The vines responded favorably and the rest of the growing season was relatively uneventful, a good thing! Yields were lower than in a "normal" year. The grape clusters were small and tight, resulting in concentrated flavors. We harvested the Tannat on September 12th.

Vinification and Aging

The Tannat was de-stemmed before going into a small tank for whole-berry fermentation. The fermentation took six days to complete and the wine was left on the skins for two days of extended maceration. The wine was aged in 1 year old French oak barrels, and it was bottled in August 2009.

Aromas, Flavors & Palate Impressions

The 2008 Tannat is intensely dark red, almost black at the center of the glass. Aromas include blackberry, mulberry, allspice, and spearmint. On the palate the wine has tart fruit flavors of cranberry and sour cherry coated with chocolate. It shows more depth with earth and floral flavors that include jasmine, black olives, tea leaves and cedar. The tannins are very firm at the front of the palate but quickly integrate as the wine finishes smooth. This wine is perfect for fall and winter comfort foods such as stews and roasts.



The Numbers

Alcohol	13.2%	Appellation	Alta Mesa
pH	3.59	Rootstock	101-14
Total Acidity	5.9 g/L	Clone	Horton
Barrel Type	French Oak	Soil	Gravelly Clay Loam